

IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – FEBRUARY 2007

General Summary. Temperatures averaged 15.1° or 9.1° below normal while precipitation totaled 1.76 inches or 0.78 inches greater than normal. This ranks as the 13th coldest and 14th wettest February among 135 years of state records. This was also Iowa's coldest month since December 2000 and coldest February since 1989.

Temperatures. February began very cold with below normal temperatures recorded on 16 of the first 18 days of the month. Decorah reported the lowest official temperature of the month with a -26° reading on the morning of the 5th while Estherville had the lowest wind chill reading with -36° on the morning of the 15th. Temperatures averaged more than 20 degrees below normal on the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 14th and 15th. Above normal temperatures finally prevailed from the 19th through the 25th with Keosauqua reaching 59° on the 21st for the month's highest temperature. The last three days of February again averaged colder than usual; however, there were no subzero readings after the 18th.

Heating Degree Day Totals. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 23% greater than last February and 22% more than normal. Heating requirements so far this season (since July 1) are running 10% more than last year but 3% less than normal thanks to a mild November through early January period.

Precipitation. Snowfall was frequent during the month. The first event of consequence came on the 6th and brought 3 to 5 inches to far northeastern and eastern Iowa and light snow elsewhere. Another event on the 11th/12th brought an additional 3 to 5 inches of snow to parts of north central and northeast Iowa. Quick on the heels of that event was a statewide storm with greatest amounts of 3 to 5 inches along the Missouri border. However, the big event of the month began on the afternoon of the 23rd and continued into the 26th in some areas. This event brought freezing rain to about the northeast one-half to two-thirds of the state with major damage centered upon central and east central Iowa where one to two inches of ice accumulated on trees and power lines. This was easily the state's most damaging ice storm since March 7, 1990 (if not worse). The ice finally gave way to snow with heavy snow falling across about the northwestern one-half of Iowa. Greatest snow accumulations occurred from west central to northeast Iowa with 19.6 inches of snow at Cresco. At month's end parts of south central and southeast Iowa were snow-free while 10 to 16 inches of snow cover remained over portions of north central and northeast Iowa. February snowfall averaged 12.5 inches or 6.2 inches more than normal. This ranks as the 8th greatest February total among 120 years of records. Cresco reported the most snow during the month with 31.1 inches, their greatest monthly total since March 1959.

Winter summary. Temperatures for the three mid-winter months averaged 22.5° or 1.0° above normal while precipitation totaled 4.89 inches or 1.72 inches more than normal. This ranks as the 65th coldest and 8th wettest winter among 135 years of state records. This was both the coldest and wettest winter in 6 years.

Harry J. Hillaker, State Climatologist

Iowa Dept. of Agriculture & Land Stewardship
Wallace State Office Bldg; Des Moines, IA 50319
Phone: (515) 281-8981; E-mail: Harry.Hillaker@idals.state.ia.us